

EAST AND WEST SERIES

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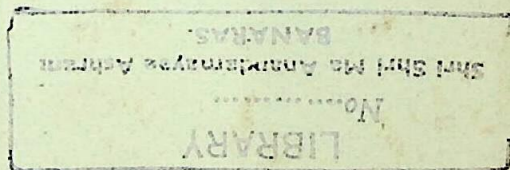
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March-April, 1963

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PRESENTED

THREE
PROPHETS



T. L. VASWANI



EAST AND WEST SERIES

[Monthly]

An Interpreter of the Life of the Spirit

THREE PROPHETS

9/23

CONTENTS

Introduction	..	..	..	3
Sri Chaitanya	..	..	..	10
Guru Gobind Singh	..	..	..	23
Swami Vivekananda	..	..	..	33
Words of Wisdom	..	..	..	43

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IMPORTANT

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—The Manager

WHAT THEY WRITE ABOUT US

A small magazine that does a big job, that is what the *East and West Series* is. It is a monthly magazine devoted to unfolding the lives of the saints, both of the East and West. It practises the austerity that it preaches, and, in its modest exterior, hides a palpitating heart that is full of love. No wonder that it has a host of readers from all over the world.

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Sri Vaswani's message needs to be heard by every man, and the ripples of thought that he has initiated will touch every shore. India is indeed fortunate that it has him to hearken to in these days when the young nation is in danger of copying its Western counterparts and going their material way.

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INTRODUCTION

THE essays brought together in this number were written at different times, with the one aspiration :—"Be in this world like a traveller, like a passer-on." In the spirit of a pilgrim are these essays written, asking all who read them to bless me.

Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, Guru Gobind Singh, and Swami Vivekananda are among the immortals of history. Why? Money is dust : knowledge is power : but yet a greater power is sacrifice. They all proclaimed :—"He lives who loves!" They realised that "we are all the fruits of one tree and the leaves of one branch!"

In one of the earliest songs of Humanity we read :-

Thou art in my heart!

The world is in Thy Hand !

These words were found in a recently-discovered prayer of an ancient king of the kingdom of Nile,—Akhnaton Pharaoh of Egypt.

In our days, Blake sang of the love of God in significant words :—

Seek Love

In the darkness of the night

And the winter's snow,

With the naked and outcast,—

Seek Love there!

"I do not ask," rightly said Walt Whitman, echoing the teaching of all the truly great ones of Humanity, "I do not ask the wounded person how he feels : I myself *become* the wounded person. Not a mutineer walks handcuffed to

jail but I am handcuffed to him and walk by his side."

St. Francis of Assisi voiced the very essence of Sri Chaitanya's gospel of love when he said :—

"Blessed is he that serves and desires not to be served!

" Blessed is he that truly loves and seeketh not love in return !

"Blessed is he that doeth good unto others and seeketh not that others do good unto him!"

The poet of Iran, Rumi, in a dialogue with himself, asks the soul to tell forth the "tale of the Beloved."

A seer and singer of the "Beloved" was Sri Chaitanya. He appeared in Bengal in the sixteenth century. In the same century appeared Guru Nanak in the Punjab and Kabir at Banaras.

It was a period of social disintegration in India. It was a period, too, of a new illumination initiated by the saints and prophets and pioneers who appeared in different parts of India.

They all sang of Love as the Secret of life. They all saw Love as the supreme Reality. They gazed and gazed on the Eternal Reality till gazing grew into ecstasy.

In a small town was Sri Chaitanya born. It is named Navadvipa. It was a centre of Sanskrit learning. Navadvipa had, at one time, a University.

Navadvipa was a centre of studies in logic : and learned men came there from different places to teach logic and literature, metaphysics and sociology. I saw Navadvipa, many years ago, with reverence in my eyes for the students and the pundits of Navadvipa. They are, I said to myself, a part of the great saint and thinker, Sri Chaitanya, who, centuries ago, taught there and blessed all students, all teachers, blessed men and birds.

A quiet part of Navadwipa was named Mayapur : I saw that small, beautiful place, too, and bowed in reverence to the blessed name of Sri Chaitanya. There, in the year 1485, was Chaitanya born. On the river-bank stood the people, taking the holy bath and singing the sacred words :—“*Hari bol! Hari bol!*” “Sing the Name of the Lord!” The words became the *mantra* of him who was born that day,—the Child of Destiny, whom millions acclaimed as the saint of Bengal, as one of the great and gifted seers of Divine Humanity.

Emerson has said :—“Follow the great ones and see what the world hath at heart!” Sri Chaitanya was, indeed, one of the world’s great ones. He spoke out of the heart,—the wisdom of the heart,—to a world which, he saw, was a world full of aspiration. The very stones and trees, he taught, move in a world of beauty and love, and the stars above shine with the light of love. The grass, too, which grows on the ground, Chaitanya taught, has its spiritual lessons to teach us like stones and streams and the stars above.

Ramakrishna,—the Guru of Vivekananda,—and Vivekananda, too, bore witness, as Chaitanya did, to the great teaching that love is the one supreme Reality in this world of *maya*. Ramakrishna, indeed, announced the great truth in the significant words:—“Knowledge and love of God are ultimately one. There is no difference between pure knowledge and pure love.” For, indeed, when you attain to pure knowledge, which is more than empirical, you move in self-detachment, you renounce desires. And pure love, is it not, also, open only to those who, renouncing appetites and desires, have taken refuge at the feet of the Lord? On the heights, then, knowledge and love meet each other, greet each other, and see each other, in the Beauty,—the one Beauty of the Beloved.

Chaitanya Mahaprabhu glorified love as the supreme end

of life. And Ramakrishna was never tired of repeating this message to all, who met him, in the few significant words:—
 “Love God! And in love find the fulfilment of your life!”

Both Chaitanya and Ramakrishna taught that the light of love shineth in him who hath destroyed the “ego,” who hath cancelled the “I” and, becoming a zero, passes on and enters into “infinity.”

“Who can ever know God?” said Ramakrishna one day. “It is love of God I want.” Loving God, we well may say:—“Let us learn to love all. Let us love even those who go astray,—the sinners,—not alone the saints.” Let us love the little ones, Chaitanya taught, love children,—angels on earth. “Sing God’s Name and the glories of God (*vibhūtis*),” cried Chaitanya and Ramakrishna. And everyday, Ramakrishna taught, let us go into silence and meditate on God, the Mother, on a saint or a *bhakta*, on the words and deeds of Krishna, of Jesus or Budhha, of Nanak or Kabir. And sitting in silence, see how everything in the world is passing. All things go. Houses, buildings, institutions, kingdoms, empires,—pass away. Alone the Mother Divine is real. Meditating thus, you will develop what the *rishis* have called *viveka*, discrimination. You will know that all things are fleeting, that only the One, the *Atman*, abides. All things pass away.

Centuries before Ramakrishna trod the soil of India, a great thinker, one of the greatest the world has seen,—Guru Shankara (Shankaracharya),—glimpsed the truth that in *bhakti* was reflected the “true form” of the *Atman*, the Real Self. Guru Shankara said:—“Among the instruments of *mukti*, emancipation, the supreme is *bhakti*, devotion, love.”

Sri Chaitanya asked all to sing the Name of Krishna with a loving heart. He said:—“May you enter into the true joy of life.” Today, India is assailed by forces of dismem-

berment and decay. Today, the machine threatens to dominate the life of the people, and the cry goes forth from many Indian hearts :—"Where is freedom?" True freedom is a song which sings in the heart of him who is filled with joy. It was a peasant saint of South India who, filled with joy, exclaimed, centuries ago :—

*"We are slaves of none
We fear not death!
Joy-filled are we :
We know no ill,—
No bondage!
Ignorant are we of pain,
And we are for ever happy!"*

Sri Chaitanya rediscovered Krishna and Brindaban. Krishna was Love Incarnate and Brindaban was a Shrine of Love. Chaitanya asked his disciples to rebuild Brindaban,—the city of Krishna.

Before he passed away, at Puri, in 1533 A. D., millions in the U. P., Bengal, Orissa and Assam had embraced Chaitanya's faith and Chaitanya's way of living. In these provinces, the village-folk meet together, even today, and sing the Divine Name, Krishna-Radha. In the U. P., there is still a village called the "Pathan Vaishnava Grama," full of Vaishnavas who are Muslims. They came under the influence of Chaitanya and were initiated into the Vaishnava Faith.

AFTER years of wandering, after many experiences of life in East and West, the great disciple of Ramakrishna and Guru Shankara, the great teacher of young India, the apostle of Hinduism to the nations of the world,—Swami Vivekananda,—realised that India was under the spell of imitation

In a new study of the *Upanishads* and a new awakening to the call of service and sacrifice, Vivekananda asked India's youths to rebuild the India of the strong, the India of the free. Both Guru Gobind Singh and Swami Vivekananda peeled this message to young India. What a cry of the heart is in their message to India! Listen to Guru Gobind Singh's words to the Khalsas :—

*Do they despise you?
Do they say you are of low caste?
Believe me, you are Chosen, the Divine Khalsa!*

*Ye cobblers, tanners and weavers,
Ye washermen, heavy-laden labourers,
O ye farmers, sons and daughters of the soil!
Here is the Ancient Light of the Knowledge of God!*

*Hold it in your hearts!
Meditate on this Supreme Flame!
It is Love : all else is illusion and death!
The Master-Song is Life!
The Master-Name,—Nama,—is Love Immortal!*

*Believe me, man is one, God is one, Love is one!
One with the inner Light,
One with Truth,
One with Love!*

*Live ye in the Nama!
Live ye in the Silence!
And he lives who loves,—none else!*

*Go within yourself! Love the good!
Embrace the abundance of smaran!
So conquer death and win true Freedom,—
The Freedom of the Immortals!*

This, too, was the accent and the emphasis in the call of Vivekananda to young India. "O India!" he cried at the top of his voice, "listen to the call of service! Forget not that the lower classes, the ignorant, the poor, the illiterate, the cobbler, the sweeper, are thy flesh and blood, thy brothers! Love, selfless love, is the one thing needful, the one treasure untold, the one pearl of great price.—"

It was a time of chaos,—some said of "revolution."

I was in a village. In the evening, temple-bells rang calling men and women to worship. And around me I heard temple-talks on Shankara and *maya*.

And they asked me :—"Who are you?"

"I know not," I said, "who I am."

"Dost thou believe in the mosque or the temple?" they asked me.

"I know not," I said. "I only know that I am my brother's. And this, too, I know that salvation is neither in Kasi nor in Mecca. I only know that whether you go to the Ganges or to the Jamuna, you carry heavy fetters on your feet, if you have not love in your hearts."

"And where find you your God?"

I said :—"He is among the poorest, the lowliest and the least. In sun and shower is He, in toil and labour."

There is, I humbly submit, a holier music in silent service of the poor and lowly than in all the gorgeous chanting of temple priests. So many gods of gold in the temples! If you will truly worship them, melt them and pour out the gold in service of the starving, shivering gods of the earth.

Let me close in the words of an ancient scripture, the *Talmud* :—"Let not a man eat his meal before sharing his food with the poor, the animals and the birds!"

T. L. VASWAN'

SRI CHAITANYA

[1485-1533]

BRIEF but beautiful was my stay in Bengal, half a century ago. One of the fruits of my stay in beautiful Bengal was my spiritual contact with the great and holy spirit,—Sri Chaitanya. For years together, since that blessed day when I first learnt to meditate on him and his message, I have thought of him not merely as a Teacher, not merely as a Prophet, but as “Mahaprabhu,”—the Master who does not “drift away,” the Blessed One who abides as an “eternal companion” of the soul.

I recall the words of a beautiful Hindi song sung by Akbar (Akbar Shah): it was the Moghul emperor's offering at the lotus-feet of Sri Chaitanya :—

*I hail thee, O Chaitanya!
Thou hast conquered my heart!
How ravishing is the rhythm of thy mystic dance!
Thou art the Lord of my aspiring heart!
How may I in words express
The love I have for thee?
Shah Akbar begs of thee to grant him
A drop from the sea of thy radiant love.*

To many, Sri Chaitanya is a world-genius. To his devoted disciples, he is “Mahaprabhu,” the Great One, the Great Master. Some Christians have called him the “Indian Christ.” Chaitanya, indeed, recalls to my mind the hallowed figure of Jesus. Both emphasise the truth, which is the truth of truths, namely love. Sri Chaitanya calls it *bhakti*, *prema-bhakti*.

The teaching, at once of Jesus and Chaitanya, I see radiant in these four great truths :—(1) Love God, and see everywhere the One,—the Holy One who is the spirit of Love. One of the “New Sayings” of Jesus is:—“Raise the stone and thou shalt find Me. Cleave the wood and I am there!” (2) Love all creatures,—man, bird and beast. (3) Realise the power and potency of God’s Holy Name. And (4) utter the Name in humility of heart, and you will find that the name changes the life of the sinner.

Sri Chaitanya, in his teaching, repeatedly asked his disciples to realise the beauty of Love Divine. So did Jesus. He spoke of the “Kingdom of Heaven” as being “within you,” “in the Heart”! “Know thyself!”—was the call to every man of both Jesus and Chaitanya. “Whoever,” said Jesus, “knoweth himself shall find the Kingdom of Heaven!” “This Kingdom,” Chaitanya called the “Kingdom of Krishna,” the “Kingdom of Love,” which is in the “Heart of man.”

And Sri Chaitanya’s love referred not only to God, not merely to man, but to all creatures. And I believe Jesus, too, taught love not merely to God and man but to all creatures. Often would Jesus sit in holy silence and utter the Name Divine. And Sri Chaitanya,—who called the Divine Name “Krishna” or “Hari,”—would often utter the Name, “Krishna! Krishna! Hari! Hari!”—would in joy dance with the Divine Name on his lips, would dance and shed tears and, in rapture, in the intoxication of the Holy Name, would fall down unconscious,—in deep communion with the Divine Spirit.

Both Jesus and Chaitanya regarded self-control, control of the senses and the mind, restraint of the *indriyas* and appetites, as essential to the life of the Spirit. Jesus renounced the flesh to commune with the Divine Father. Chaitanya Mahaprabhu renounced the flesh to commune with Krishna. With him and with Jesus “asceticism” was only an element

in the awakening and expansion of spiritual life. Not "asceticism" but annihilation of the "ego" was the dominant thought at once of Jesus and Chaitanya. Both gave the teaching :—"Live in the world but in the spirit of one who would give to all the love of a pure heart and, in his activities, commune with the Divine Spirit."

Chaitanya realised that the light of true life was love. To all he gave his love,—to the illiterate and to those who, in spite of their learning, are immersed in the deep ignorance which is *maya*. And wherever he went, he blessed lonely hearts. He wrote but one book. But his influence has surpassed that of great scholars, pundits and learned men. His love moved out to bless and inspire thieves and robbers. Chaitanya blessed humble lives. Chaitanya threw a mysterious spell on beggars but, also, on rulers and wealthy men.

This one life, brief in years, this one life, whose last period covering fifteen years or more was passed in solitude and contemplation, has surpassed in influence and inspiration the lives of so many of those whom the world calls "great." The rulers and kings of his day are forgotten. The Master lives on and grows on in influence and power, true power,—the power of love. He taught but one truth. He lived but one truth. He bore witness to the one truth:—"Seek ye the Kingdom of Krishna!"

Today, I see "influential" men. They organise relief for the poor, but lose all love for the poor. There are men, today, who preach the Gita and the Lord. In regard to some of them I have sometimes asked myself :—"Is Krishna in their hearts?" Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu went into silence and filled with love the cup of many a human heart. And he closed his brief, beautiful life on a note of sacrificial love, pouring it on the poor and the lonely. Sri Chaitanya's life became a miracle of sacrifice.

SOME years ago, I saw Navadvipa, where Sri Chaitanya was born, four centuries and a half ago. It was a dark period in India's history. Bengal had lost its political freedom. The Pathan ruled Bengal : it was a rule of the sword. The Hindu, in this hour of piteous need, cried :—"Where is my God? What hidden place conceals Him still?" Krishna's Face, it seemed to many, had been eclipsed. Men and women asked :—"Whither, O whither art Thou fled, O Lord? Be with us yet!"

In answer to this piteous cry, Nimai came! The vision of his destiny did not rise before him as long as he was a popular professor in Navadvipa. But there came a time when he renounced his chair in the University of Nadia. The "learned" professor became "ignorant": and he went about in the clothes of a mendicant.

The story of religion is full of sudden "conversions." In that sudden blaze of light, which shone upon him as he stood in the Gaya Temple, did Krishna reveal Himself to young Nimai. He returned from Gaya to Navadvipa in a *fakir's* garb, yet radiant with the beauty of a Sun that knows no setting. Nimai's old pride was dead : his life became a picture of humility.

From Krishna flowed into Chaitanya's life the grace and energy of New Life. Chaitanya gazed at Krishna and sang Krishna and talked Krishna and communed with Krishna in streams and stars!

Of Tennyson, the great English poet of the Victorian era, we read, that he was, one day, going round his garden in company with a friend. And as the two walked together, his friend asked him what he thought of Christ. Tennyson walked on in silence until he came to a sunflower in the garden. The fine bloom of the sunflower was lifted to the sun. Then the Poet pointed to the sunflower and said :—"What the sun is to this sunflower, Jesus is to my soul. He

is the Sun of my soul."

Krishna became the Sun of Chaitanya's soul, and healing rays went out of Chaitanya to many in many parts. A new hope was born in the hearts of men and women, and Bengal became the leader of a new movement in India.

Radiant was his face. He came to kindle a light in the darkness of his age. He was born near a *nim* tree : so the mother loved to call him Nimai. He was, also, called Gaur. The word means fair, beautiful. Nimai was fair of form and colour and beautiful to behold. Not until he entered into *sanyasa*, the great renunciation, and stepped up as a Teacher of men, was he called Chaitanya. The name was given him when he was initiated by Keshava Bharati into *sanyasa*. The fuller name was Sri Krishna Chaitanya,—the meaning of the words being, "Krishna-centred," "Krishna-awakened," "one whose whole consciousness was centred in Krishna."

At the age of forty-eight years, he passed away. He was richly blessed. He made society purer, he made literature richer and sweeter, he made the life of the people nobler by teaching them to commune with Krishna and Radha through *japa* and *kirtan*,—meditation and holy song.

SRI Chaitanya's life of ecstatic communion with Krishna and of dedicated service to men and suffering animals has been called a "drama in three acts" by a great *bhakta* who called himself Krishna Das (a servant of Krishna). His fuller name is Krishna Das Kaviraj. His book, named *Chaitanya Charitamrita*, is regarded as an authority on Chaitanya and his followers. Its language is Bengali blended with Hindi.

The first act in the Drama of Chaitanya's life is called by Krishna Das *adi-lila*. It covers the first twenty-four years of his life. In this first *lila*, we see Nimai as a frolicsome

child, fond of sports and plays. We see him as a student becoming proficient in Sanskrit grammar, logic and poetry. We see him, at last, as a young man teaching pupils in his own *tol* or school. We see him growing in honour and social influence. He defeats in argument a great scholar named Keshava Misra. Nimai is honoured as the greatest scholar of his day.

Nimai goes on a pilgrimage to Gaya to pay offerings to the soul of his departed father. In the Temple of Gaya, Nimai sees Vishnu's footprints and suddenly chants the Name of Krishna. Nimai becomes a *bhakta*. He forgets his books and learning. He remembers only Krishna. Asked to lecture on grammar and logic, he lectures on Krishna!

"Krishna is my all," he says. He falls into "fits," has trances and visions, and goes into mystic communion with Krishna. Advaita Acharya hears of Nimai's "trances" and comes to examine for himself the ecstatic fits of Nimai. Advaita Acharya is a great scholar, but is conquered by Nimai and becomes a *bhakta*. Nityananda, too, comes to see for himself the trances of Nimai and becomes a disciple of Nimai.

Navadwipa is become a centre of Nimai's new *bhakti* movement. Nadia's houses ring with *kirtan* and *Hari Nama*. "Temple-sacrifices and renunciation are not for *kaliyuga* (the present age)," is the cry which spreads from house to house; "*karma* (ritual) and *gnana* (knowledge) are paths difficult to tread. *Bhakti* (love) is the need of the age."

Soon after, Nimai leaves his home at night and goes to Katwa and implores Keshava Bharati to initiate him into the *sanyasa* order. Keshava Bharati gives to Nimai the new name "Sri Krishna Chaitanya." Chaitanya severs all home ties for the sake of Krishna, the Beloved. Here begins the second act in the Drama of Chaitanya's life, named the *madhya-lila*.

Chaitanya goes on a pilgrimage to many places,—to the

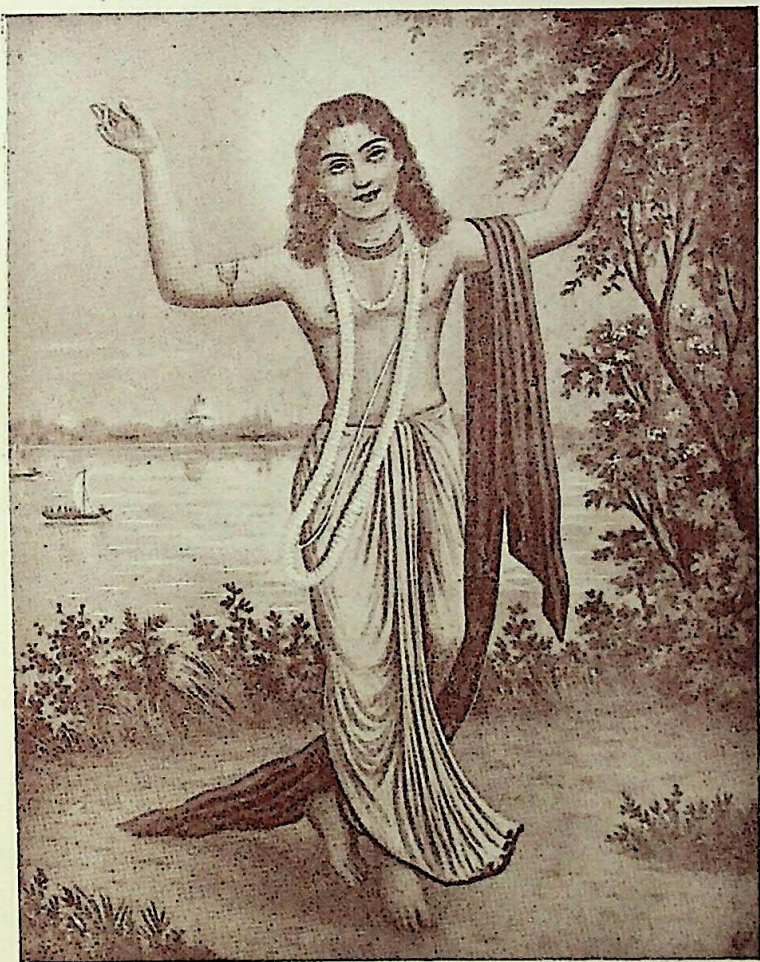
South and to the North, to Pandharpur and Rameshwaram, to Banaras and to Mathura and Brindaban. Many persons are won over to the Vaishnava Faith by Chaitanya. The very sight of Chaitanya inspired many to *bhakti*,—devotion to Krishna and Radha. To see Chaitanya was to love Sri Krishna.

The third period is named *anta-lila*. In Chaitanya, the longing grew to spend more of his time (1) in quiet contemplation of his Beloved, Sri Krishna ; and (2) in the service of the poor and broken ones in whom Chaitanya saw the *lila* of his Beloved. Chaitanya, having travelled much, settled down at Nilachala, Puri, in Orissa. There, the Hindu ruler of Orissa, Pratap Rudra, was won over to the Faith of Chaitanya.

Orissa became a centre of the Vaishnava faith. There his disciples came, every year, to have his *darshana* and his blessings. There, too, stayed his great disciple, Hari Das, the "singing apostle" of the Chaitanya Dharma, all the year. Hari Das lived in an humble cottage near Chaitanya. Hari Das was born a Muslim and he was not an "educated" man. But he was a gifted singer. The song of *Hari Nama* intoxicated him and made his life rich in inspiration. In him was verified the teaching of Chaitanya :—"Krishna is reached by *bhakti*,—faith and love,—not by logic or the logical mind."

In 1533, Sri Chaitanya disappeared. And every eye was touched with tears: but no tongue could speak. The Vaishnava Community was plunged in sorrow. The *bhaktas* shed tears and lived in the vision of Chaitanya.

IN one word may be expressed Sri Chaitanya's ideal of a true Vaishnava. He is a man of *prema-bhakti*,—a man of love and devotion: and his life is dedicated to the service



SRI CHAITANYA

Practise love to all beings and you will reap the benefit of
a million austerities and meditations.

—Sri Chaitanya



GURU GOBIND SINGH

He lives who loves:
None else, none else !

—Guru Gobind Singh

of Krishna and the service of the poor and broken ones.

Sri Chaitanya prayed every day that all may be guided in the Krishna-way. And the Krishna-way was the way of *bhakti*, the way (1) of faith in the Lord, and (2) of love and compassion to the poor and needy.

Chaitanya asked his disciples to serve orphans with love in their hearts. Sri Chaitanya taught, too, that no beggar should be turned out. He further taught that birds and beasts should be looked after. Sri Chaitanya repeatedly urged that the life of everyone should be built in faith in Krishna. And over and over again, he pointed out that this faith in Krishna must rise to its highest form, which he called *prema* or love. Love-filled, love-absorbed, love-intoxicated, indeed, was the life of Sri Chaitanya.

What longing thrilled Sri Chaitanya, thrilled his physical body, his mind and his heart! "Mine eyes rain tears," he said. And again :—"In separation from Govinda of my heart, from Krishna the Beloved, every second is prolonged to a *yuga*, an age."

And Chaitanya realised, how richly, that the love of Govinda, the mercy of Krishna, was as the sun which did shine on good and evil alike, was as the rain which regarded neither tribe nor caste nor family, but poured its benediction on everyone.

Filled with *bhakti*, Chaitanya fell into divine delirium, again and again : and in his ecstasy, he experienced separation from Krishna, missing Him, again and again, yet finding Him, again and again. Chaitanya experienced at once the delirium of separation and the ecstasy of joy. Krishna had become the idol of his heart, the one *moorti* with which he communed with love intense, experiencing now sorrow, now joy.

In the *Chaitanya Charitamrita*, we read that Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, one day, uttered the following words :—

*Unbearable to me . . .
 Is my separation
 From Him, my Beloved!
 What shall I do?
 O tell me, where shall I go
 To see my Beloved?
 Of whom shall I ask of Him
 Who singeth on the Flute
 And captures my heart?
 O Thou, the Master of life!
 O Thou, my dearest dear!
 O Thou, my life, my light, my love!
 This separation from Thee
 Breaketh my heart.
 Come, my darling, come!
 In Thy mercy, come!*

And saying thus, Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu shed tears, then fell down,—unconscious, in communion with his Beloved, Krishna.

WHEN they asked Chaitanya what they should do to see Krishna, he answered :—"Go into yourself : and chant the Holy Name!"

We must retire in silence into the depth within us. A mystic of Iran said :—"Spend not thy life in wandering!" "Sit silent," said Chaitanya, "and commune with Krishna in love." I recall the beautiful words of St. Tukaram :—

*Utter the Name Divine!
 Sit in silence!
 Compose thy mind!
 Tuka knows that God dances*

When His bhakta (devotee) sings!

This chanting of God's Name is called *kirtan*. Pomp of rituals is meaningless. "Place Him," says a Bengali poet, "on the lotus-throne of your heart, and bring Him the offering of *bhakti*."

The *mantra* of *mantras*, Sri Chaitanya said, was the Holy Name. The one cure of world-sorrow in the *kaliyuga*, he said, is :—Chant the Holy Name of Krishna! This chanting is *Nama sankirtan*. It purifies the heart. "Chant the Name," urged Chaitanya, "at meals, in bed, here, there and everywhere."

They asked him what would be the coming Church, the *Sangha* to be. He said :—"The coming *Sangha* will be non-sectarian. It will be the Church Universal of *Nama sankirtan*. It will be established in all towns, in all villages, all over the world."

The Holy Name may well be sung by all, whether high or low : yet none is really worthy of chanting the Name. Sri Chaitanya said :—

*He who is humbler than a blade of grass,
He who is more forbearing than a tree,
He who honours others,
Yet hath no desire of honouring himself,—
He, indeed, is worthy of chanting the Name Divine!*

One of the great disciples of Sri Chaitanya was Vasudeva. In one significant line, Vasudeva expressed the very essence of *kirtan*. He said :—"My Lord Gauranga (i. e. Sri Chaitanya) purifies men by making them sing the Name.

In Sri Chaitanya's days, indeed, village after village was thus purified by *kirtan* parties. They went in different directions, touching village after village : and the village-folk felt blessed. In some villages, indeed in many, they

kept up *kirtan* everyday for hours together. They sang the Name and were not tired.

In the Nadia District, even today, there is a village in which *sankirtan* has been kept up every night for four hundred years and more. There is a pretty story connected with this *kirtan*. Sri Chaitanya visited a village before he took *sanyasa*. The village-folk were filled with joy and enthusiasm.

After a few days, Sri Chaitanya said :—"Tomorrow I go!"

And the village-folk said to him :—"How can we leave you ?"

And he said :—"Give me leave to go tomorrow : I shall come again."

Sri Chaitanya was not able to return to the village. But the village-folk said :—"The Master said I shall come again. His word can never prove untrue. Sure as the sun rises in the East, the Master will come again."

And in expectation of Sri Chaitanya's coming again to the village, they have kept up this *kirtan* for four centuries and longer. Bands of singers keep up the *kirtan* everyday : and all the twenty-four hours the Name Divine is sung, purifying the life of the village-folk. They are simple and honest in their dealings. And in every home in the village is kept alive *smaran*,—remembrance of the Lord.

I read of another place in East Bengal,—Sylhet. There *kirtan* has been kept up for ten years together. The *kirtan* began at a time when the place was in urgent need. An epidemic had broken out and they remembered the teaching of Sri Chaitanya :—"The Name of the Lord can drive out all epidemics." Since that day, *sankirtan* has been going on there, day and night, for the last many years.

SRI Chaitanya walked earth-free. He seemed to transcend the dimensions of space. Has he not transcended today

the earth,—the earth and the sea, the earth and all men, all the princes and principalities of this world? He abides as an immortal.

“Krishna! Krishna!” was Chaitanya’s one message to the people. His lips moved only in praise of the Lord. He was drunk in the wine of His wisdom. Chaitanya started with “renunciation” : he grew in the power of the Holy Name : he attained to “annihilation of the self.” In his purified heart there was room only for the singing of the Holy Name. In love for Krishna, Chaitanya renounced family, wealth and honours. He became a mendicant : he became a zero. Through *Hari Nama* he beheld the Face of Krishna. His “I” vanished : only Krishna remained! Chaitanya mastered the alphabet of abandonment. Chaitanya gained the wisdom of *prema-bhakti* (love and surrender).

Chaitanya became a true *dervish* and, in the love of Krishna, he loved the poor and broken ones. He served them with tender love in his heart. “Come! Come!” he said to them. “Come to Krishna! Why wander ye thus afar? You will not find the joy of life if you stray from the Lotus-feet of Krishna!”

Who is the pilgrim on the Path? And what is the end of his pilgrimage? Chaitanya’s answer was simple. He who knew himself in Krishna was the true pilgrim on the Path. And he reached the end of his pilgrimage who, purifying himself of desire, annihilated his ego, the lower self, and so was free, as fire burnt pure when no more darkened with smoke.

Verily, when the heart is pure from *kanchan*, *kamini*, and the ego, it moves from darkness into Light. The purified heart attains to illumination and becomes an abode of the Beloved.

Chaitanya’s brief but beautiful life shows how the true seeker is led from purity to annihilation of the ego, and from annihilation to the joy of union with the Beloved. The

self, the ego, says the *Gita*, is the enemy of the Self. Die to self, if you would enter into the Life of the Spirit. Purify your heart and make it a temple of the Lord, a mirror of manifestation, a throne of the Lord. When you attain to annihilation, your gaze is withdrawn from everything except Krishna.

In his last step in the ascent to the Life Divine, the aspirant is filled with love. Yet he never thinks :—"I love." But he says to himself :—"Thou dost love me, Lord!" He grows in the consciousness :—"What right have I to say 'I' or 'mine'?" Then he feels truly happy. He is calm. He gains Peace and Joy. A Light doth shine in his heart, and he sees there is but One Face Divine everywhere.

In the last period of his life, Chaitanya touched the Transcendent, living more in silence and sacrifice than in speech. And often would Chaitanya gaze on the sea : and from the depths of its waves would come to him a Voice of Silence. And Chaitanya would, with tear-touched eyes, look astonished, "like one stupefied, a diver in the very sea of witnessing."

In the last period of his life, it seemed to his intimate disciples, who seldom left him alone at night, that the Master, though in the body, had really passed away from himself,—passed away from everything except Krishna on whom he gazed and gazed with tear-filled eyes. In that one gaze was Chaitanya drowned,—astonished, dumb-founded.

With Chaitanya remained nothing save Krishna, Krishna. The silent gaze of the Master seemed to say :—"Krishna is the Only Reality, and within the heart is naught but Krishna!"

Then, indeed, from every drop of running waters and every ray of shining stars,—aye, from the tongue of every atom, came loud and clear to Chaitanya the one word :—"Krishna! Krishna!"

GURU GOBIND SINGH

[1666-1708]

IN a world of struggle and strife, a world of hunger and unending wars, he appeared,—the Prophet. He appeared like a flame bringing to all the blessed message of the One God of Peace,—the *Akala Purukha*, the Eternal Saviour of Humanity.

In Guru Gobind Singh's heart was the Great Master, Guru Nanak the Beloved. Therefore was all Humanity in Guru Gobind Singh's heart. There was in it no ache of self, no pain of separateness. He gave all his self away. He received in his heart the Master Nanak, and into it flowed the whole universe.

"The wise man does not lay up treasures," said the great Rishi of China, Laotse. In the hallowed heart of Guru Gobind Singh, the only treasure was Guru Nanak and the great Guru's vision of the Universal,—the One in all,—the One in all classes and communities, in all races and religions.

His actions flowed from his heart. It was an angel-heart. It was a reflection of the Mother-Heart of the Universe. So he stood by the weak and the down-trodden, the poor and the forlorn. Listen to what he says to all who would hear :—

*Do they look down on you?
Do they say you are of low birth?
I shall clothe you in fair garments of joy!
I shall invoke the Fire of Heaven
To mingle with your blood!
Are you not mine own,—
The chosen children of the Master?*

*Cobblers, —they call you,
Tanners, weavers, washermen,
Farmers and labourers!
Come! Come ye all!
And receive the Light Divine!
It is for you and such as you!
It is the Ancient Light
Of the Wisdom of God!*

It is easy to understand that the great Guru inspired devotion in the hearts of those who sat at his feet to learn and be blessed.

Said Khan was a Muslim : how devoted was he to Guru Gobind Singh! The Guru was at Nader : Said Khan was far away in the hills. From the Kangra Hills he came to see the Guru. One day, as Said Khan sat in the midst of other disciples, he received a letter from his sister, Nasiran. The letter said :—

“Brother dear! Aurangzeb’s men have captured the saint, Buddha Shah; and today he is gone to his Heavenly abode. Now my turn comes : and mine eyes have not seen the Beloved (Guru Gobind Singh). Yet have I communed with him in meditation. So there is no sorrow in my heart. Ready to die am I for the Beloved. The soldiers of the emperor are making house-searches, today. My turn cometh today or tomorrow. Blessed am I !

“Second Day :—Lo! Brother dear! They have come! The soldiers are here! I have slung a *kirpan* on my belt. Lo! I am dressed as a true soldier-disciple of the Beloved. Thy sister, Nasiran, the Beloved’s Nasiran, is, verily, happy to die the martyr’s death. And now, brother dear, farewell! Yet have we not met already in the Beloved,—forever?”

This letter was read to the Guru. He closed his eyes : he blessed his daughter, the Muslim devotee, Nasiran.

With love in her heart, Nasiran went into a sleep deeper than sleep, and a dawn diviner than all the dawns on earth. And many were there, like Nasiran, who loved the great Guru, and died for him with joy in their hearts.

GURU Gobind Singh was a practical mystic. He became a saviour of India by breaking the force of Moghul imperialism and building up the Khalsa. I gaze at his picture and say to myself :—"Here is a figure of supreme beauty!" For in him humility was blended with service and both were kindled with the light of faith in God,—the great Saviour of the nations.

The Guru was born in 1666 at Patna. Looking back through the vista of these three centuries, can you picture to yourself the Guru and the India of his days? India disunited : India oppressed : Akbar's dream murdered by his successors : and Guru Gobind Singh the very picture of sadness! Iron has entered his soul. But he weaves it into a great vision,—the vision of a Free Khalsa. The word "Khalsa" means the "pure." And the "pure" in heart become the servants of God and the prophets of freedom. When the "Khalsa" soul is purified, new missionaries and new martyrs will arise until the destiny of the Khalsa is fulfilled.

The Khalsa was meant by the Guru to be a symbol of true democracy. Members of the Khalsa dined together and worshipped together. The one great vow taken by every member of the Khalsa was "service." Today, many think of democracy in terms of power rather than service. The Khalsa was a Brotherhood,—of service. Power will not solve the world's problems, but the spirit of service will,—

the spirit of fellowship, the spirit of love and sacrifice.

The Khalsa was a brotherhood of soldiers who aspired to be servants of saints. Everyone of the Khalsas took the vow in words which I have read, again and again, with tears in my eyes. The Khalsa said :—

*I own nothing !
All belongs to Him, the Lord,—
My money, my home, the breath of my life !
My religion is to serve and die for others !

Not in aloofness from my countrymen,
But on the battle-field,
I fain would die,
For the glory of the Akala Purukha !*

The Khalsa called himself "*akali*," the soldier who feared not death but lived in the *Akala*, the Eternal. And to Him he gave all credit, crying :—"Wah guru!"

Thrilling is the story of the deeds of Guru Gobind Singh and his disciples, the Khalsa. They stood up heroically against the imperial power of Aurangzeb. Many were killed, but they would not surrender. Pursued was the Guru by imperial forces : he faced them. Then, overcome by tremendous odds, he ran from place to place : he never surrendered. Separated was he from his beloved disciples, but they remembered him and loved him to the last.

The Guru finds himself, one day, in the solitude of the Lakhi Jungle. Some of his disciples come to know that their Beloved Leader is in the forest, cut off from his people. The disciples hear in their hearts the call of the Beloved, saying :—"Come!" And they come: they speed on : they come quickly, crying to him. To quote from a moving little song the Guru had composed :—

They heard the call of the Beloved!

*And they came running, running,
 They came crying to the Master!
 Even as runs the scattered herd of buffaloes,
 Dropping the half-chew'n grass from their mouths,
 So ran to him his disciples,
 On hearing his voice,—
 The enchanting voice of the Beloved!*

To me Guru Gobind Singh is wider than any creed : and his temple in the heart within is purer than our sanctuaries. Meek was he and content with obscurity. He had no restless desire for earth's honours, for distinction and eminence, so common, alas! in what the world calls "great men."

In loneliness and meekness he spends his time on a mountain-height, away from crowds, with no desire for popular applause. India, alas! was then a subject-nation, and Hindu homes were subject to oppression and suffering. To Gobind Singh comes one day a Voice on the mountain-heights :—"Gobind! Gobind! how long will you dwell in solitude? Must you always walk in meekness and meditation? Are there not moments, hours, periods, when men, countries, nations, must arise? Gobind! Arise!" To Gobind comes the call similar to Krishna's call to Arjuna on the Kurukshetra :—"Uttishta! Parantapa!" "Arjuna! Arise!"

Blessed is Gobind. To him comes the call :—"Uttishta!" "Arise!" He responds to the call :—"Thy servant standeth, a sacrifice to Thee, O Lord!" Gobind descends from the mountain-height to the plain below. Gobind arises to be a saviour of Hindusthan. Gobind becomes a "perfect sacrifice" to the *Sat Sri Akal*, the True One, the Deathless One. Gobind fulfils the destiny of his life.

Aurangzeb is the Emperor of India. Great is his power, and he is strong in his resolve to convert the Hindu nation

to Islam. The Hindus tremble before the might of the Moghul emperor. But this one man, Gobind,—young in years but strong in his faith in the *Akala Purukha*, the Deathless Spirit,—is fearless. The Guru says :—

The Beloved hath sent me down!

I come singing His Name!

I go sowing the seed of the Eternal!

My refuge is in Him

Who is the Steel of the Blood of Centuries,—

Who is the Heart of all the Ages!

To understand the inner purpose of the Guru's great struggle, it is necessary to understand the inner purpose of the long reign of the Moghul emperor, Aurangzeb. It was a despotic and disruptive reign : and chaos followed it as soon as Aurangzeb died. Some Muslims, it is true, worshipped him as a saint : they did not understand that his intolerance undid the work of Akbar the Great. Aurangzeb failed to win India to Islam : he failed in his efforts to eradicate from India all religions except Islam. His "successes" were superficial. All Hindu temples were razed to the ground : all Hindu schools were closed : all public Hindu worship was prohibited. Aurangzeb did but succeed in ruining his dynasty and his country. His death-bed letters are his "Confessions" and may still be read as a tragic commentary on the life and policy of a sovereign who failed because he was a fanatic. Aurangzeb wrote :—

"I know not who I am, where I shall go, or what will happen to this sinner full of sins. My years have gone by thoughtless. God has been in my heart but my darkened eyes have not recognised His Light. I have greatly sinned!"

GURU Gobind Singh was so humble : and he had love for the poor. When he was at the height of his glory, when even the Moghul king sought his friendship, the great Guru did not forget to serve the poor mountain-people. How humble and, therefore, how truly great!

One day, Guru Gobind Singh asked for a cup of water. A nobleman's son offered him water in a shining cup. He was a young man : he was handsome : his hands were clean. But the Guru returned the cup, and the young man looked wonderingly into the Guru's eyes.

Then said the great Guru :—"O young man! it is true, your cup is a shining one and your looks are handsome and your hands are clean. But they have not laboured in the service of the saints. Make your hands pure first! And they will be purified through humility. Cast aside all caste-pride! Be pure! Be a servant of the poor ones! And I shall drink of the water in your cup."

Guru Gobind Singh was a scholar and a poet : but there have been greater scholars and poets. He was a leader : he carried on his fight with skill and courage : but not alone for his leadership do we remember him. Power and authority pass away. Resources and riches had he at his disposal when at the height of his glory : but not for his wealth is he truly great. Much greater wealth has been possessed by others. For one thing and for one thing alone we count him great. His life was filled with the spirit of sacrifice.

Cleverness and tricks do not make history : it is the sacrificial men who build history. Guru Gobind Singh is great for his absolute self-surrender to God and his wonderful sacrifice. Every day we recite the prayer :—"Nanak das sada kurbani!" "Nanak, Thy servant, is ever a sacrifice to Thee!" But what do we sacrifice everyday? Guru Gobind Singh's was a perfect sacrifice. We may not reach his height, but some sacrifice we can do everyday. Small sacri-

fices let us offer everyday, and our lives will be ennobled, enriched, sanctified, abundantly blessed!

Look around you! Nation jealous of nation : armies and fleets arrayed, one against the other! Survey the communities : see how one quarrels with another! See the strifes of the ambitious! Behold oppression, pain, suffering, the tears and tragedy of the poor and weak. Then behold the tear-touched face of Guru Gobind Singh. Arrayed against him is the imperial might of the Moghul : he faces it as a hero among men, as a servant of his people.

There are times when he is lonely,—cut off from his wife and friends, cut off from the brave Khalsa,—and he looks for a hiding place from the storm. But in his solitude and loneliness he is not alone. The *Akala Purukha* is with him, is by him. He fights under the flag of the *Sat Sri Akal* ! Nothing can shatter his dream of a new Society, a new India. Nothing can break his new Community, the brave Khalsa, bound together by faith and brotherly love.

Guru Gobind Singh's sons,—all the four,—die martyrs : not one denies his faith in God and the great Guru. Not one withdraws his allegiance to the Khalsa. Let the body perish : let not faith vanish. To this truth Guru Gobind Singh bears witness in the darkest hours of his earth-life.

THE last brief period of his brief life,—he was but forty-two when he passed away,—he spent in loving communion with God. He began his life as a contemplative on the Hem Kanta mountain : he closed his life in deep communion with the *Akala Purukha* on the banks of the Godavari at Nader. There he stayed, and a few gathered around him. And this Community of contemplatives he called, "Abchal Nagar," words which literally mean, "The City of the Eternal." The Community spent much of their time in

worshipping *Nama* and in manual work. They sang of *Nama*. In *Nama*,—the Name, the Holy Spirit,—they lived and moved and had their being.

With the last benediction of his earth life, he left to his disciples the Book beloved, the Guru Granth Saheb, saying:—"Today, the *Bani*, the Word, is your Master, your Guru." Yes,—the living spirit of the Gurus speaketh, today, in the words of this Ever-living Book, this inspired Testament of the Saints. When I read it in holy silence or in the presence of a few believers, I say to myself:—"Is not this Book a revelation of the *Akala Purukha* to us all who are lost in the *maya* of life?"

I believe that if the Living Word, the *Bani* of the Gurus and the Saints, the Seers and Sages of India and Humanity, of all climes and races, could re-inspire the Sikh Faith, it would indeed become a living faith and its message would thrill India again, from end to end. This may not be until we are filled with the child-like spirit of the Sikh village-folk and their great teachers, the Sikh Gurus, the Saints and the Bhaktas of India.

Like Guru Nanak, Guru Gobind Singh drew together all the castes into one Brotherhood. And the rich and the poor combined to form one fraternity, one mighty union of service and sacrifice,—a living witness of one God. Guru Gobind Singh's dream, in building the Khalsa, was this divine dream of building a new race of Humanity nourished by love.

Simple rules of life did Guru Gobind Singh give to the Khalsa whom, indeed, he loved with the love of his Mother-heart. Some of these rules were:—

*Eat little,
Sleep little,
Love compassion,*

And serve the poor!

*

Forget not this,—

Thy home, my child!

Is not a palace,

But a forest, a tapobana!

So live as an anchorite at heart!

Did not Jesus say to his disciples :—

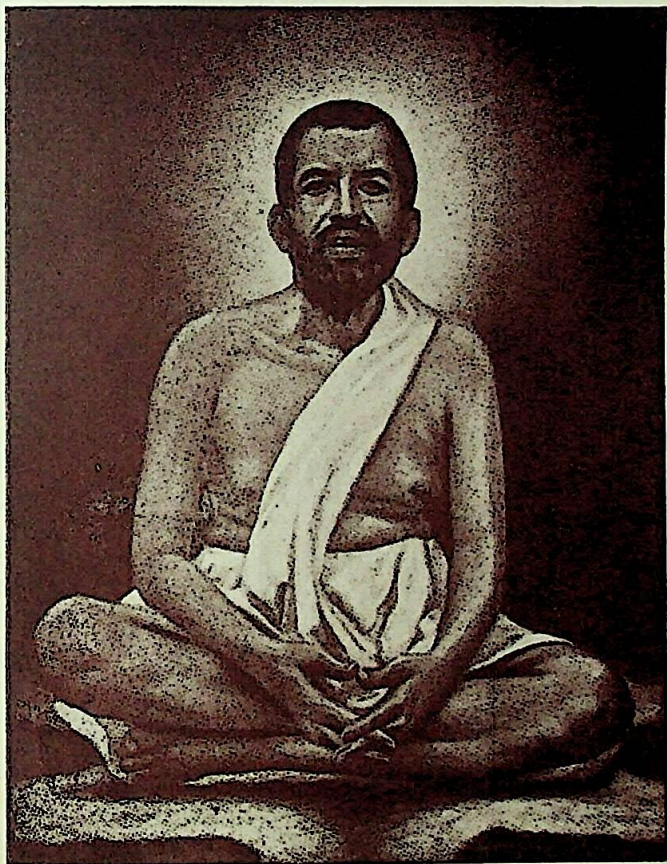
This world is a bridge :

Pass over it,

But do not build on it!

Guru Gobind Singh dedicated his life to the service of the poor. He stood up, in courage unsurpassed in the history of our nation, to challenge a power which many thought was omnipotent. Wounded was he, again and again, in his fight for India's freedom,—the fight for the poor and forlorn. But he rose again and he fought again. The fear of fear fell from him : for the Flame of His Presence touched his heart, and he declared :—"His Grace hath made me fearless !"

Guru Gobind Singh hath written his name in sacrifice. It is a name which shines as a star in Heaven. In moments of meditation, I have often said to myself :—By what small things we die! Goliath died by a stone! Krishna by a little arrow of a huntsman! Christ by a kiss! Guru Gobind Singh was stabbed by an ungrateful man whom the great Guru forgave! And meditating on him, I have said to myself, again and again,—“Happy, indeed, are the few, the chosen few, who gave their all in service and sacrifice and who, in giving their all, found the One Supreme in whom East and West are one!”



SRI RAMAKRISHNA PARAMAHANSA

I see His Beauty moves in every human form :
He reveals Himself alike in the sinner and the sage !

—Sri Ramakrishna



SWAMI
VIVEKANANDA

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

[1863—1902]

SWAMI Vivekananda was born a century ago, on the 12th of January, 1863. He was a graduate of the Calcutta University : he distinguished himself in philosophy. His uncle took him, one day, to see Ramakrishna Paramahansa. That moment was a moment of destiny : that moment became the turning-point in Vivekananda's life and India's destiny.

He owed not a little to his mother's influence on him. In a lecture in America, he paid her a warm tribute, saying :—“It has been my mother who has been the constant inspiration of my life and work.” She owed not a little to the influence on her of the great Hindu Epics,—the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata*. These great Scriptures enshrine the wisdom of India's Rishis. Both declare :—“Worship the Heroes and Sages of the Motherland and build up strength,—strong bodies and strong minds,—and have reverence for the Guru, if, indeed, you will serve society and Humanity.”

These truths shaped the thought and life of Narendra, as Swami Vivekananda was then called. And in the years of his growing manhood, he taught that men must have not only ideals but, also, the strength (*shakti*) to turn ideals into deeds. He taught what the Vedas, the Upanishads and the Gita taught, in the long ago :—“It is beautiful to be strong.”

In his moving book, *The Soul Enchanted*, Romain Rolland asks :—“Where may youth rebuild the world?”

In *shakti*,—was Vivekananda's answer.

And if I were asked where youth may rebuild India, I would humbly answer :—“In the message of the Gita and the lives

of Heroes and Saints!"

As a boy, Narendra was interested in manly games, in boxing, swimming and rowing. He studied mathematics and philosophy. He was a graduate of the Calcutta University. He was a lover of music. At a later age, he spoke of music as an element in the true culture of India. He was well-versed in music,—vocal and instrumental. His rich musical voice inspired those who heard him.

Speaking of Narendra, Ramakrishna said :—

"So many devotees come here : but there is not one like him.

"Some are like lotuses with ten petals, some like lotuses with sixteen petals, some like lotuses with a hundred petals. But among lotuses, Narendra is a thousand-petalled one.

"Others may be likened to pots and pitchers : but Narendra is like a huge water-barrel.

"Others are as pools or tanks : but Narendra is a huge reservoir!

"Narendra is a very big receptacle : he can hold many things. He may be likened to a bamboo with a big hollow space inside!

"And Narendra has cultivated dispassion. He is not under the control of attachment or sense-pleasures. I feel great strength when Narendra is with me at a gathering."

One day, speaking to young Narendra, Ramakrishna said :—"You were arguing about God. I did not like it! As long as a man argues about Him, he hasn't realised Him! The nearer you approach to God, the less you reason and argue. When you attain, all reasoning, all disputes and controversies come to an end. Therefore go into communion with God in silence!"

Narendra had a reflective mind : he would not accept anything on hearsay. His later name, Vivekananda, is significant. His joy (*ananda*) was in *viveka* (discrimination): he followed the Light. And even as a young man, he realised that discrimination must be blended with purity, inner renunciation, if one is to live the true spiritual life.

Narendra was a young man when his uncle took him, one day, to see Ramakrishna. Narendra, a keen intellectual of the college, a student of Green and Gibbon, of Mill and Spencer, of Descartes and Hume, of Kant and Fichte, of Hegel and Schopenhauer, of Comte and Darwin,—Narendra, fired by Napoleon and the great Revolution and inebriated with the new wine of Western knowledge,—Narendra meets the great mystic, Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa. The saint loves young Narendra. He hears the saint say in answer to his question :—"God can be realised. I see Him and speak to Him as I speak to you and see you. But who takes the trouble to realise Him? They will shed tears for wife, for children or possessions, but who weeps for the love of God? Yet this I know that if a man weeps sincerely for Him, He in His mercy will manifest Himself to him."

Narendra kept his critical faculties awake : he was anxious to maintain his "independence." "I will not," Narendra said, "accept anything which my reason cannot accept." His attitude to the Hindu scriptures, too, was critical. He said to Ramakrishna :—"Even if millions of men believe in God, I will not say I believe if I have not proved it to myself!" "I desire absolute Truth, absolute Knowledge!" said Narendra to Ramakrishna.

But Ramakrishna never wavered in his love for Narendra. The love of the saint made Narendra, at last, a believer and a *bhakta*. One day, Ramakrishna, in a semi-conscious state, came and quickly "touched" Naren. A sudden change came upon him. The effect on him of western "rationalism"

was overcome. Naren no longer denied God. Naren passed through a series of mystic experiences, crying again and again :—"Shiva! Shiva!"

Naren's parents became anxious. Was he ill? Then, suddenly, Naren's father died in 1884. Naren was, face to face, with the problem of looking after the family,—his mother and her five children. "I almost died of hunger," he says; "I wandered barefoot, from office to office : I was rejected on every side. I gained experience of human sympathy. I came in contact with the realities of life. I made the discovery that the world had no room for the weak, the poor, the deserted."

There were moments in that dark, starless period of his life when "the world," he says, "seemed to me to be the creation of a devil." He was faced with the cruelty of life. The doubting spirit awoke again in him, and he asked himself :—"Why does God allow so much suffering on the earth?" He spoke against God! He remembered the words of a great Bengali philanthropist :—"If, indeed, God is good and gracious, why do millions of people die for want of a few morsels of food?"

Some of Ramakrishna's disciples thought he was lost! But Ramakrishna continued to love him, continued to trust in him. "Ramakrishna," said Vivekananda at a later stage, "was the only one who had unswerving faith in me. His unshakable confidence joined me to him for ever. He alone knew the meaning of love!"

Narendra's struggle with poverty continued. One evening, when he had eaten nothing, he fell down, exhausted, in front of a house, on the roadside. It seemed to him that all the strength in him was gone out of him. His soul was torn in twain. And suddenly he began to see : there was light. His doubts were solved : and he exclaimed :—"I see! I know! I believe!"

His mind was at rest. His body, too. He spent the night in meditation. He made up his mind to renounce the world.

That very day, Ramakrishna came to Calcutta and asked Narendra to come back with him for the night to Dakshineswar. There the saint had a quiet talk with Narendra, telling him :—"I know you cannot remain in the world : but, for my sake, stay in the world as long as I live!"

Narendra went into the Temple and prayed :—" Mother! I need nothing save to know and to believe !"

Narendra no longer doubted : he believed. Narendra had passed from meditation to love. Ramakrishna said to him :—"My child! you have the Mother's work to do."

And Naren said to Ramakrishna :—"Master ! how happy I feel in *samadhi* ! I forget this cruel world. I beseech you to let me remain in *samadhi*."

But Ramakrishna said :—"How can you ? You are a vast receptacle of life. How can you wish to stay absorbed in personal joy, when the world is in suffering and pain ? When the realisation becomes natural to you, by the grace of the Mother, then in your normal state you will realise the One in all beings, and you will do great things in the world. Won't you serve and uplift the humble and the poor?"

The words of the saint went into the heart of Narendra, and he resolved to be a servant of the people, a brother of the poor and lonely, a burden-bearer. Service before *nirvana* or liberation,—became henceforth his ideal.

For years, Narendra had lived without faith. For years, Narendra had worshipped Reason as his God. After much struggle and much interior suffering, Narendra realised that he must learn to obey and follow his Guru, if he would live the true life of the Spirit.

The "Religion of Man" must needs be a "religion of fellowship" with the Guru,—the "Great Purifier." Rama-

krishna asked his beloved disciple,—Vivekananda,—(1) to live in the world; (2) to awaken faith in many hearts; and (3) to serve the poor in the spirit of love. Such service was, verily, worship,—a *yagna*, an “offering” to the Lord, a sacrifice to the *Daridra Narayana*, the Lord of the Poor.

SOME have spoken of Swami Vivekananda as a forerunner of political nationalism. He loved India. Sacred to him was the very dust of this ancient Land. And over and over again, he asked the Indians to unite. But his message was not one of political nationalism. India, I humbly submit, is greater than her “politics.” For, our freedom is not in debates of Assemblies nor in parchments of Parliament. Our freedom is in ourselves, in our resources of mind and character,—in the *shakti* within us,—in the power of the spirit.

Vivekananda went to America by way of Japan and represented the Hindu Faith at the “Parliament of Religions,” in Chicago. The Parliament was held in September, 1893. Vivekananda’s eloquence and personality arrested attention. The *New York Herald* wrote:—“Vivekananda is, undoubtedly the greatest figure in the Parliament of Religions. After hearing him we feel how foolish it is to send missionaries to this learned nation.” And the *New York Journal* wrote:—“Vivekananda is an orator by divine right.” The great Gathering in Chicago paid a warm tribute to his “rich rhythmical utterances” interpreting the wisdom of the Hindu Faith.

Vivekananda realised the values of the wisdom of the Rishis. He called it “Vedanta.” He wished to make it a world force. Many Americans became his disciples. Two of them were Madam Louise, who became Swami Abhay-ananda, and Mr. Sandsberg, who became Swami Kripananda.

Vivekananda had disciples in England, too. The most noted of them was Miss Margaret Noble. She was known as

"Sister Nivedita." The word is significant. It means "dedicated." She was a gifted lady : she "dedicated" her life to her Master. She stayed in a small Hindu house in Calcutta. She loved the Hindus and served them with singular energy and devotion, and conducted a school for girls : she visited Hindu homes. Her great book, *The Web of Indian Life*, reveals deep insight into Hindu thought and Hindu life. She admitted that superstition had crept in : but she pointed out that even in these "masses of superstition were nuggets of gold and truth." Hindu culture and Hindu civilisation, she urged, were good and beautiful in every part : the Rishis of ancient India had a message for the nations of the world.

Vivekananda opened centres of Vedanta in America. One Centre of his activities was the "Vedanta Society" founded in San Francisco. In India, Vivekananda opened centres of work in Calcutta, Madras, Muradabad District (Bengal), and at Mayavati on the Himalayas near Almora. An important centre of his work was at Belur, near Calcutta. Years ago, I visited some of these centres in the spirit of a pilgrim and an humble student of Hindu thought and life.

Vivekananda travelled from place to place to preach the Vedanta. "Arise! Awake!" was his trumpet-call to the nation. He set on fire the hearts of many youths to serve the Hindu Faith and make it world dynamic.

Vivekananda's Master, Sri Ramakrishna, expressed the essence of the "Vedanta" in the phrase which he repeated, again and again :—"Naham! Naham! Tuhu! Tuhu!" "Not I! Not I! Thou! Thou!"

Great was Vivekananda's love for the Hindu faith and Hindu civilisation. India, he urged, was a spiritual nation. India was a Teacher of the world in the past, and India will be, he said, a Teacher of the nations again.

VIVEKANANDA asked the youths of India to save Hindu society from the poison of Western influence. Therefore, he urged, that the Hindus must become strong, and make use of Western methods and modern science to interpret Hindu ideals to the West.

In rebuilding Hindu society, Vivekananda emphasised the thought of serving the poor and oppressed. India's need, he said, was "heroes of service." He asked the Indian youths to develop their *shakti* (strength) for the service of millions. "Be brave! Be brave!" said Vivekananda, again and again. "Forward,"—was his watchword. "We want," he said, "infinite courage," "infinite zeal," and "infinite patience." He repeatedly said to the youths of India :—"Strength is life,—life eternal, immortal."

Vivekananda, by his bold declarations, inspired India's youths to have faith in themselves and their country. "Stand up," he said, "be bold, be strong! Know that you are the creators of your destiny." And he pointed out that the youths must not emulate the West. "All the strength and succour you want," he said, "is within yourselves." Listen to his call of service:—

"Go all of you, wherever there is an outbreak of plague or famine or wherever the people are in distress, and mitigate their sufferings.

"I bequeath to you, young men ! this sympathy, this struggle for the poor, the ignorant, the oppressed. Go this very moment to the temple of Parthasarathi and bow before him, who was a friend to the poor and lowly cowherds of Gokul, who never shrank to embrace the pariah, Guhaka, who accepted the invitation of a prostitute in preference to that of the nobles and saved her.

"He who has served and helped one poor man, seeing the Lord in him, without thinking of his caste or creed

or race or anything,—with him the Lord is more pleased than with the man who sees him only in temples.

“The world is burning in misery. Can you sleep?”

I shed tears when I read the following words of Vivekananda:— •

“At your very threshold Narayana Himself, in the form of a poor beggar, is dying of starvation. Instead of giving him anything, would you only satisfy the appetites of your wife and children with delicacies?”

India, alas! is drifting away to alien cults. They are the cults of imitation. And imitation is weakness. This great Teacher and Inspirer of India protested in strong terms against “the spell of imitating the West.”

We have much to learn from the West in regard to scientific discoveries and organising life,—the life of society and the utilities of social life,—the work of civilisation. Nor must we forget that the West, too, has a mysticism no less valuable than Eastern mysticism. And India has to do much for the poor and the broken ones. Let India have the humility to learn from the people of the West. We needs must realise unity with the Supreme in action. The world-will needs men who realise Him in action.

Vivekananda saw the place of technological, scientific and political achievement in the programme of national life. He realised the value of medicine, sanitation, electric power and food for nation-building. But let it not be forgotten that all programmes of social welfare stand in need of a “regulative idea,” and that is the *Atman*, the Spirit. India’s regeneration will not be achieved by mere technological discoveries. We must not destroy the “roots” of India’s life : India’s life is rooted in the *Atman*, the Spirit. The message of the *Atman*, the Spirit, is the

message not alone for India but for all the nations. For broken up, alas! and deformed is "modern" life. Is not Europe politically, socially, and spiritually adrift? Thinkers from Balzac to Dostoevsky and Rolland have, again and again, pointed to the growing instability of thought and life in Europe. Not a few think there are "signals," today, of a new gathering storm,—the third world war!

From India and from Europe have come voices asking me:—"What is religion?" My answer is brief:—Religion is deed, dedicated deed. Religion is the action which flows into sacrifice,—the action which is offered to the Eternal.

"And where," they have asked me, "is the temple where we may offer our worship to God?"

My answer is in the words of Hindu seers and sages:—"Pilgrims are ye all: and your temple is your daily life of sacrifice."

Worship God with life,—is the message of the Hindu Faith. A singer of my native land,—beloved Sind,—sings this message in a stirring little poem:—

Pilgrims are ye all !

Not one there be who can truthfully say :—

"The Earth belongs to me!"

Act! ye fellow-pilgrims! Act!

And on your way from Earth to the Beyond

Move on, offering your life

As a sacrifice!

WORD OF WISDOM

Wealth and forms of beauty
And all the learning of all the books
Will pass away !
Yes,—all beside Thee, O Lord!
All earthly things will pass away!
So bless me, Lord!
That in all my long exile,
From birth to birth,
Thy Love may ne'er be lost to me!

SRI CHAITANYA

I bow down to Thee, O Life Divine!
Thou dost move in the ant and the elephant alike :
And Thou dost bless the poor and the rich alike!

GURU GOBIND SINGH

IF you put God in every movement of your life,—in your clothes, in your talk, in your body, in your form, in everything,—the whole scene changes, and the world, instead of appearing as woe and misery, will become a heaven.

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

OFFER thy all to God and expect nothing in return! He who asks for a return is no better than a shop-keeper!

SRI CHAITANYA

'Tis not by the practice of silence,
Nor by the wearing of the ascetic's robe,
Nor by shaving the head
That God is found!

GURU GOBIND SINGH

RELIGION is realisation, not talk, nor doctrine, nor theories, however beautiful they may be.

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

LET your life be as deep as the ocean, but let it, also, be as wide as the sky.

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

By singing, dancing and intense contemplation, lift your mind to ecstatic communion with God.

Bhakti, or absolute faith in Krishna, is the easiest path to Heaven.

SRI CHAITANYA

LORD! Thou art the Hindu, Thou art the Muslim, Thou art the Turk, and Thou art the Feringhi!

Thou art the warrior clad in shining armour, and Thou art the peace supreme!

Thou bestowest love, and Thou givest Thyself to all!

Thou art the cure of all sorrow and suffering. And Thou art the secret of the vigour and bloom of youth!

Thou art the beauty of the princess, and Thou art the emaciated form of the *brahmachari* with wooden beads hanging from his neck!

The Vedas art Thou, and the Qur'an!

In all shapes and everywhere, Thou art dear to me. In every form Thou art Thyself!

Thou art my vow, my *dharma*,—my beginning and my end!

GURU GOBIND SINGH

O Thou, the Ruler of the Worlds!

Give me Thy grace

That I may have Thy Vision Divine!

SRI CHAITANYA

As a man you are separate from the woman; as a human being you are one with the woman!

As a man you are separate from the animal; but as a living being, the man, the woman, the animal, the plant are all one! And as existence you are one with the whole universe.

That existence is God, the ultimate unity in this universe.
In Him we are all one!

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

CONSIDER thyself more worthless than a straw.

Renounce pleasure and pride, wealth and knowledge,
friends and relatives at the Lotus-feet of the Lord.

And sing His Name, day and night.
And thou wilt win thy way to Heaven!

SRI CHAITANYA

He stretches forth His Hands as a beggar for alms :
Does He not, also, stand at the door,
As the One Giver, who gives and gives and ever gives
With His Hands full,—giving away His all to all?

GURU GOBIND SINGH

IF thou art an anchorite at heart, thy home will be to thee
as a *tapobana*,—a forest of meditation.

GURU GOBIND SINGH

THE Vedanta teaches that the world should be renounced
but not on that account be abandoned.

To live in the world and not be of it is the true test of
renunciation.

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

WE must not hate anyone, because this world will always
remain this way, a mixture of good and evil, a grand
gymnasium, where we will take exercise, and become
stronger and stronger.

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

Be humbler thou than grass!
 Be thou more tolerant than the tree!
 Renounce thy "ego" and all "egotism,"
 And serve all!
 Pay homage to all!
 And sing *Hari Nama*,—the Name Divine!

SRI CHAITANYA

Be jealous of none. Be ready to lend a hand to every worker of good.

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

MANIFEST the divinity within you, and everything will be harmoniously arranged around it.

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

The richest robe a man may wear
 Is *bhakti* to the Supreme
 And service of Krishna, the Beloved!

SRI CHAITANYA

I salute Him, whom no waters can ever wet,
 Whom no sky can ever cover!
 Unstained is He by deeds and doing
 He holds the orbs of Heaven in His Hands :
 But He Himself stands on nothing!

GURU GOBIND SINGH

KNOW through Advaita that whomever you hurt, you hurt yourself.

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

WITHOUT the knowledge of Spirit, every bit of material knowledge is only adding fuel to fire, only giving into the hands of the selfish man one more instrument to take what belongs to others, to live upon the life of others, instead of giving up one's life for others.

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

BOOKS RECEIVED

[Reviews may appear in due course]

THE SCIENCE OF WISDOM, Vol. I and Vol. 2, by C. J. Toyne; [Sidgwick & Jackson, Ltd., London] : 15s. and 21s. respectively.

SHROPSHIRE SAINT, by George Lawton; [Epworth Press, London] : 7s. 6d.

THE TEACHINGS OF BHAGAVAN SRI RAMANA MAHARISHI IN HIS OWN WORDS, by Arthur Osborne : Rs. 4/-; THE POEMS OF RAMANA MAHARISHI, by Sadhu Arunachala : 75 nP. [Both published by Sri Ramanasramam, Tiruvannamalai, South India].

THE WAY OF IMMORTALITY, by Ian Fearn; [New Renaissance, London] : 10s. 6d.

THE ART OF THINKING, by Dagobert D. Runes : \$ 2.75; LOST LEGENDS OF ISRAEL, by Dagobert D. Runes : \$ 2.75; PICTORIAL HISTORY OF PHILOSOPHY, by Dagobert D. Runes : \$ 15.00; THE BLIND SEER: GEORGE MATHESON, by John Crew Tyler : \$ 4.75; THE PHILOSOPHERS OF CHINA, by Clarence Burton Day : \$ 6.00 [All the five published by Philosophical Library, New York].

BRAVE MEN CHOOSE, by Garth Lean; [Blandford Press, London] : 12s. 6d.

STUDIES IN THE UPANISHADS, by Govind Gopal Mukhopadhyaya; [Sanskrit College, Calcutta] : Rs. 15/-.

A MODERN IMITATION OF CHRIST, by Clemens Humilis; [A. R. Mowbray & Co., Ltd., London] : 17s. 6d.

SRI KRISHNA HIS PHILOSOPHY AND HIS SPIRITUAL PATH, by Bahadur Mal; [Vishveshvaranand Vedic Research Institute, Hoshiarpur] : Rs. 4/-.

MIRROR OF VIRASHAIVISM, by Sri Kumara Swamiji; [Navakalyana Math, Dharwar] : Rs. 2.50.

DIVINATION, by John H. Manas; [Pythagorean Society, New York] : \$ 3.00

THE QUIET IN THE LAND, by D. W. Lambert; [Epworth Press, London] : 7s. 6d.

ON THE KNEES OF THE GODS (Vol. I), by Kashyapeya;
[A. K. Chattopadhyay, Calcutta 19] : Rs. 5/-.

PRAYER, by Friedrich Heiler; [Oxford University Press,
New York] : \$ 2.50

YOU, by M. Raymond; [Clonmore & Reynolds, Ltd.,
London] : 21s.

CHRISTIANITY IN ACTION, by F. Addington Symonds;
[The Worlds Work Ltd., Surrey] : 12s. 6d.

THE WISDOM OF THE SOUL, by H. C. Randall-Stevens;
[Acquarian Publishing Co., London] : 12s. 6d.

HOMAGE TO SANKARA, by T. M. P. Mahadevan; Re. 1.50;
THOUGHTS FROM THE GEETA, by R. Krishnaswami Aiyar :
Rs. 4/- [Both published by Ganesh & Co., Madras].

STATIONS OF WISDOM, by Frithjof Schuon; [John Murray,
London] : 21s.

MAURICE NICOLL : A PORTRAIT, by Beryl Pogson; [Vincent
Stuart Ltd., London] : 35s.

THE GREAT SECRET, by Hendrik Willemsz; [C. W. Daniel
Co., Ltd., England] : 9s.

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 No. 48. The Voice of Vivekananda
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